

MINUTES —Fourth Annual *Confederation of Reformed Evangelicals* Presbytery
Moscow, ID - 7:00 p.m., September 28, 2000

Moderator: Brett Baker, Eastside Evangelical Fellowship, Bellevue, WA

Voting representatives:

1. John Appel, Trinity Church, Wenatchee, WA.
2. Roger Beasley, Eastside Evangelical Fellowship, Bellevue, WA.
3. Greg Bero, Grace Evangelical Church, Redondo Beach, CA.
4. Dave Hatcher, Eastside Evangelical Fellowship, Bellevue, WA.
5. Gene Helsel, Trinity Church, Wenatchee, WA.
6. Tom Lincoln, Grace Covenant Church, Texarkana, AR.
7. Steve Ramsey, Grace Covenant Church, Texarkana, AR.
8. Chris Schlect, Christ Church, Moscow, ID.
9. Chori Seraiah, Christ Covenant, Cherokee Village, AR.
10. Dennis Tuuri, Reformation Covenant Church, Oregon City, OR.
11. Doug Wilson, Christ Church, Moscow, ID.

1. Invocation

Brett Baker greeted those assembled. Dennis Tuuri opened the meeting in prayer.

2. Psalm Singing

Dave Hatcher led the assembly in singing Psalm 148.

3. Exhortation from the Scriptures - Chori Seraiah

Chori Seraiah taught on the unity of the church from Ephesians 4.

4. Introduction of Visitors

Brett Baker invited the visitors to introduce themselves. He then welcomed them all.

5. Member Reports

1. Bible Fellowship Church

Chori Seraiah described the situation within his church. Because they are no longer able to support a pastor, their church is dissolving and withdrawing from the CRE. Chori Seraiah left the table. Doug Wilson expressed his gratitude for Chori Seraiah's work.

2. Christ Church (formerly Community Evangelical Fellowship)

Doug Wilson explained the reasons behind the church name change. He expressed his gratefulness for God's blessing on the church and its consequent growth. He asked for prayer as the church grows.

3. Eastside Evangelical Fellowship

Dave Hatcher expressed his thankfulness for the men who examined him last year. He described the growth of the church and God's blessing on it. They are working through the issue of baptism and the covenant. He asked for prayer as the church grows.

4. Grace Covenant Church, Texarkana, Arkansas
Tom Lincoln described the state of the church and its various ministries. Randy Booth has moved to Grace Covenant Church in Nacogdoches, TX. He asked for prayer for increased building space and other items.
5. Grace Evangelical Church
Greg Bero described the youth and growth of the church. They have introduced psalm singing, catechism study, and other new items. They hope to start a classical Christian school. He asked for prayer for more elders. They recently sold their facility and are looking for a new building. He expressed his appreciation for the men here.
6. Reformation Covenant Church
Dennis Tuuri mentioned that they have moved into a new building, for which they are praising God. They have had a year of rejoicing for the new building and their joining of the CRE. The church is growing in numbers. He described their mission work in Poland. They are very thankful for God's blessing.
7. Trinity Church (formerly Wenatchee Evangelical Fellowship)
Gene Helsel reported that God has been pleased to add two elders to the church, for which he is grateful. They have also recently changed their name. The church has been growing slowly and solidly. He described some of the new aspects of their ministry. He expressed his thankfulness for God's kindness to them, and for the CRE.

Brett Baker noted that this CRE presbytery had a quorum.

6. Consideration of Fraternal Delegates: (Recommend/Extend/Withdraw)
 1. Christ Church
 1. Motion (DW/GB) to extend the fraternal status of All Saints Presbyterian, Lancaster, PA for one year. It was seated as a fraternal delegate first in 1999. After discussion, the motion passed unanimously.
 2. Motion (DW/GH) to extend the fraternal status of Beal Heights PCA, Lawton, OK for another year. It was first seated as a fraternal delegate in 1998. After discussion, motion passed unanimously.
 3. Motion (DW/DH) to extend the fraternal status of St. Peter's Presbyterian Church, Bristol, TN for one year. It was first seated as a fraternal delegate at the 1999 meeting. Motion passed unanimously.
 4. Motion (DW/SR) to withdraw the fraternal status of Ladd Hill Bible Church, Portland, OR and Shiloh Community Church, Moorpark, CA. Doug Wilson explained the reason for the withdrawals. After discussion, Doug withdrew his motion. The status of both of these churches has expired.
 5. Motion (CS/GH) to amend the agenda to include discussion of Christ Reformed Evangelical Church, Annapolis, MD. Passed unanimously. Motion (DW/DH) to receive Christ Reformed Evangelical Church as a full member into the CRE (Eric Sauder, pastor). Doug Wilson explained the reason that they had not been placed on the agenda. The church has one elder, Eric Sauder. They were not seated as a fraternal delegate last year,

but had been brought in as a mission church. Dennis Tuuri asked about the lawfulness of this procedure. Brett Baker explained the lawfulness of this, given the current language of the constitution in article II, section K. Dave Hatcher asked which confession they have adopted. Eric Sauder answered that they have adopted the Westminster Confession (1647). Motion passed unanimously. Brett welcomed Eric to the table.

6. Motion (DW/TL) to receive Cornerstone Reformed Church, Carbondale, IL into membership (Burke Shade, pastor). Doug Wilson gave the floor to Doug Jones, who gave a presentation concerning the committee report about Burke Shade and the events surrounding his discipline in the Illiana Presbytery. Doug briefly described the critical failings in the case of Illiana Presbytery against Burke Shade. Doug explained that Christ Church would like to recommend adopting the statements regarding this case. Chris Schlect admonished the men to be very careful in this situation, given the significant nature of the events. He explained Christ Church's investigation into this case. Chris invited questions from the floor. Doug Wilson described the state of the church; Burke Shade is minister, and the church has three elders. The spiritual state of the church is very good. Doug described the close personal relationships between members of Christ Church and Cornerstone Reformed Church. Greg Bero asked if the Illiana Presbytery has given any additional recent comments about this situation. Doug Jones answered that they have, and that the Illiana presbytery has warned the CRE about their actions. Dennis Tuuri asked if Mr. De Jong gave a report from Christ Church to the Illiana Pres. The answer was yes. Dave Hatcher asked for clarifications about the dates of these events. Doug Jones and Chris Schlect answered his questions. Dave asked for background about the formation of Cornerstone and these events. Doug Wilson explained the history of Cornerstone's formation. Dennis Tuuri asked when Cornerstone was formed. Burke Shade answered Feb. 14, 1999. Brett asked Chris to address what our response to the warning from the clerk of the Illiana Presbytery is, and how we should proceed. Chris answered that the warning is not a formal position, but a private one. Brett asked if CRE's receiving of Cornerstone would cause continued discussion with the Illiana Presbytery. Doug Jones answered that he would like our report to get into the hands of a number of the presbyters of Illiana well before their presbytery meeting. Doug Wilson stressed that there were no minutes kept by the Illiana Presbytery. He believes that the CRE will be in a strong position as a result. Dave Hatcher mentioned that there were records of this case in transcripts, though not minutes, and asked how this affects Doug Wilson's point. Doug Jones responded that the transcripts are not minutes and cannot be considered as such. Chris Schlect described a hair-splitting technicality from the Book of Church Order that had been used by the Illiana Presbytery against Burke Shade. It was hearsay, and thus a hypocritical call by Illiana. Dennis Tuuri asked if Cornerstone has met the qualifications for membership in the CRE. Doug Wilson explained that it

does meet the qualifications, given the history of the church. Dave Hatcher asked about condition of the church. Burke Shade answered that the church adopted the Christ Church constitution in March of 1999. Dennis Tuuri asked that, even with all the changes the church has gone through, do they still meet the qualification of entrance into the CRE. Doug Wilson responded affirmatively. Doug Jones asked Eric Sauder to comment. Eric reported that he was not aware of the content of the trial until he read the transcript. He described his close relationship with Burke Shade for the past five years, and Burke's attempt to resolve these issues biblically. He believes that Burke is a godly man. He was astonished at what happened at presbytery. He has no qualms about receiving them into the CRE. Brett Baker asked if there is an appellate court over the PCA to deal with such situations. Doug Wilson replied that there is a way to appeal to the General Assembly, but explained the inherent difficulties in doing so. Dave Hatcher asked about the charges against Burke Shade related to his views of the sacraments. Doug Wilson and Chris Schlect responded that these charges were groundless. Doug Jones referred to page 7 of the report, where it is recorded that the Illiana Presbytery acknowledged that Burke Shade does not hold heretical views, thus exonerating Burke Shade. He explained that the charges had been changed. Doug Wilson and Doug Jones explained Burke Shade's position on the sacraments and defended the orthodoxy of his views. Dennis Tuuri wanted to note that Burke Shade is a minister in good standing in the FoRC. We are not trying to remove his "defrocking" we are just accepting him from the FoRC. He called for the question. There were no objections. Brett Baker summarized the situation of Burke Shade and Cornerstone Church. Motion passed unanimously. Brett welcomed Burke to the table.

7. Motion (DW/GH) to adopt the report from the Christ Church session concerning Burke Shade and the proceedings with the Illiana Presbytery. Chris Schlect described the report briefly, and explained that they were moving to adopt pages 1-10. He defended the motion by explaining that the CRE has taken action to receive Burke Shade contrary to the actions taken by the Illiana Presbytery. In the interests of good order, and in defense of Burke Shade's good name, they made this motion. Dave Hatcher asked if this motion makes this report part of these minutes. Doug Wilson responded that they should not, but only put into the minutes under executive session. John Appel asked if the report would be sent from the CRE to the Illiana Presbytery. Doug responded that we have not considered this, but perhaps we would. Dennis Tuuri asked if the adoption of this report means that we accept the ten reasons for overturning Illiana's actions included in the report. He is concerned, since he has not had time to digest the information. Doug Wilson and Doug Jones suggested that we adopt this for the sake of giving a reason for our accepting of Burke Shade. Doug amended his motion: that the CRE moderator inform the Illiana Presbytery that the report is under consideration, and we will inform them

when we have taken action on the report; noting that we have found substantial reasons to receive Cornerstone into membership, reasons including Burke Shade's character, and have received them. The moderator of the CRE will distribute copies of the report to the members of the Illiana Presbytery immediately. Dave Hatcher seconded the amendment. Doug clarified that we may accept it as written, or may amend it later. Dave Hatcher asked what the Illiana Presbytery will do when they receive this. Doug Wilson responded that we do not know. Brett Baker summarized, asking if the approval of the report will wait until the next CRE presbytery meeting, or an ad hoc meeting. Dave Hatcher asked if we could have such an ad hoc meeting before the Illiana Presbytery's October meeting. General agreement was that it was possible. Dennis Tuuri suggested that we not do this in a hurry, that we take time to work through this in a pastoral way. All agreed. Motion (DW/GB) to amend the motion by dropping the word "subcommittee" which had been included. Dave Hatcher called for the question. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Motion (DW/DT) to modify the agenda to add consideration of Lakeside Church, Wales, WI. Passed unanimously. Motion (DW/SR) to extend their fraternal status one more year. Passed unanimously.
9. Motion (SR/DH) to recess for ten minutes. Passed.
10. The meeting was called back to order after ten minutes.

2. Eastside Evangelical Fellowship

1. Motion (DH/CS) to accept Christ Covenant Church, Brier, WA as a full member (Steve Brown, elder, Duane Hodges, teaching elder). Dave Hatcher described his relationship with the members of the church. Gene Helsel asked which statement of faith they will be adopting. Dave answered that it will be the Reformed Evangelical Confession. Doug Wilson asked if the church is coming out of a charismatic background. Dave responded that they are, and while there is no practice of the charismatic "gifts", there is still discussion of these and related matters within the session. Doug Wilson asked if the session has affirmed the closure of the canon and related doctrines. Dave responded that they have. Doug Wilson asked how we can be assured that this move out of their charismatic background will not stall. Brett Baker responded that the caliber of the men and their approach to scripture has been exemplary. Also, they are a church under elder rule. Brett is pleased with the reformed trajectory they see. Chris Schlect asked about the elders' shepherding ability. Dave Hatcher replied that the men clearly submit to the elders, as demonstrated in a number of ways. Dave believes that only one or two families still lean toward the charismatic "gifts" being manifested. Doug Wilson asked about the status of the elders and their families. Brett Baker replied that all of their children are professing believers, walking faithfully, with houses in good order. Motion passed unanimously. Brett welcomed them.
2. Dave Hatcher noted that the fraternal status of Evangelical Reformed

Church, Tacoma, WA will not be extended.

3. Motion (DH/GB) to seat Langley Reformed Evangelical Church, Langley, BC as a full member (Gary Vanderveen, pastor, Rob Lidel, elder). Dave Hatcher described his relationship with the elders and families of the church. The families are in good order. They would be coming in under the Reformed Evangelical Confession. Motion passed unanimously. Brett welcomed them.

3. Grace Covenant Church:
 1. Motion (SR/GH) to receive Emmanuel Covenant Church, Phoenix, AZ as a full member (Jeff Niell, pastor, Richard Klaus, elder). Steve Ramsey described his relationship with the church. Randy Booth gave a brief history of Grace Covenant's relationship with the church. They have adopted the CRE constitution. Their families are in good order. They will be coming in under the Westminster Confession (1647). Doug Wilson asked about any exceptions they may have to the confession. Jeff Niell responded that they take exception to the pope being considered as antichrist in the WCF. Jeff also noted that they have not come to a full understanding of Christ descending into Hades in the Apostle's Creed (though they recite the creed when included in worship). Motion passed unanimously. Brett welcomed them.

7. Seating of Visiting Delegations
Brett Baker recognized the following churches: James Graveling of Westminster Reformed Church, Bigelow, MN; Tom Trouwborst of Messiah's Congregation, Brooklyn, NY; Mike Lawyer of Grace Community, Bremerton, WA; Jamie Soles of Covenant Gospel Church, Red Deer, AB; Mark Melton of Sheridan Fellowship Church, Sheridan, IN; Marc Smith of Valley Covenant Reformed Church, Lebanon, OR; Steve Walker of Dallas, OR.

8. Seating of New Fraternal Delegations
 1. Motion (DW/GH) to seat Emmanuel Presbyterian of Fallon, NV. Motion passed unanimously.
 2. Motion (DW/DH) to seat Christ Church of Spokane, WA. Motion passed unanimously.
 3. Motion (DW/GB) to seat Blueridge Reformed Church of Lynchburg, VA. Motion passed unanimously.
 4. Motion (GV/DH) to seat Grace Reformed Presbyterian of Sechelt, BC. Motion passed unanimously.
 5. Motion (SR/CS) to seat Tanglewood Baptist Church of Sand Springs, OK. Discussion followed. Motion passed unanimously.
 6. Motion (SR/JN) to seat Grace Covenant Church of Nacogdoches, TX. Randy Booth has been installed as pastor there since August, 2000. Doug Wilson asked if Randy Booth left Grace Covenant Church of Texarkana on good terms. Steve Ramsey replied in the affirmative. Motion passed unanimously.

7. Motion (SR/DW) to seat Covenant Presbyterian Church of Decatur, TX. Motion passed unanimously.
8. Motion (DT/JA) to seat Reformation Bible Church of Aloha, OR. Motion passed unanimously.
9. Motion (DT/TL) to seat Canyon Christian Fellowship of Crooked River Ranch, OR. Motion passed unanimously.

9. New Business

Motion (DH/CS) to amend the agenda to consider item B4 to be the first item of new business. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion (DH/SR) to add to the agenda consideration of some typographical error correction. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion (DH/CS) to add to the agenda a discussion item pertaining to the formation of new presbyteries. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion (DH/CS) to add to the agenda a discussion of the election of a moderator to this meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion (DH/GB) to add to the agenda a consideration of how accurate copies of the constitution will be maintained. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion (DW/DH) to delete items A.2 and A.5 from the agenda, to be brought up at a future CRE presbytery meeting after modification. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion (CS/DW) to strike from agenda item B.3 the bracketed language which says "proposed vows to be drafted later," and to receive copies of the proposed vows. Motion passed unanimously.

B.4. Motion (CS/DT) to amend the constitution to say that the voting status of new member churches should begin the next presbytery meeting following their acceptance into membership. Doug Wilson and Chris Schlect clarified that the delegates can still make motions but cannot vote. Motion (DW/DH) to amend the motion to add this language after Article III/N and create a new section O, re-lettering all subsequent paragraphs. Motion passed unanimously.

1. Consideration of Proposed Constitutional Revisions--Submitted by Christ Church
 1. Article II/C says that within the CRE every elder must be a member of the local congregation that he serves. Motion (DW/GB) to add this sentence to the constitution: "This requirement may be waived on a case-by-case basis by a unanimous vote at presbytery." Discussion followed. Motion passed unanimously.
 2. [Article III/Q says that decisions of the presbytery with regard to the local congregation are "spiritually authoritative, but practically advisory." The words "practically advisory" have caused no small misunderstanding among some interested Presbyterian pastors whose situation in the PCA is identical to this. Proposal: The phrase be altered to read "spiritually authoritative, but because all property is owned by the local congregation, not physically enforceable."] -- This item was dropped from the agenda.
 3. Article XI addresses memorials. Motion (DW/TL) to add in the italicized

section the following sentence, "Memorials are intended to state the position of the CRE on issues which do not rise to a confessional level, or on issues concerning which a confessional statement has not yet been made." This will be added after the word "desired." Motion passed unanimously.

4. Article VI/D says that if a man has been ordained outside the CRE, then the same procedures are followed as with a new candidate. Motion (DW/GH) to modify the last sentence of the article to read that the "procedures may be modified by the presbytery to suit the circumstances." This will replace the part of the sentence after the word "then." Motion (DW/GH) amended to require a two-thirds vote. Motion passed unanimously.
 5. [Proposal: Add new Article VI/F which reads, "Ministerial credentials within the CRE are held by the session of the local church. When a minister moves from one church to another, the session of the first church forwards his credentials to the church that called him. If the church he left has ceased to exist, or has ceased to be likeminded, the presbytery may hold his credentials temporarily until he is called by a church. Ministerial credentials established outside the CRE are recognized by the CRE when a local church in which the minister is an officer is received into the CRE, or when the minister is approved following an examination by presbytery."] -- This item was dropped from the agenda.
 6. Motion (DW/GH) to drop all of Article IX because it has sunk to the level of interesting arcana, and re-number the subsequent articles. Motion passed unanimously.
2. Proposed Procedures for Future Seating of New CRE Members--Submitted by Christ Church.
Motion (CS/GH) to modify the constitution in article III/O to add these three new sentences:
1. Delegates about to become new members should normally provide to the presbytery a one-page summary of their church (membership, elders, confessional standards, other useful descriptions, etc.)
 2. The presbytery should normally examine the pastor-elder delegation, especially with regard to their confessional status, sound doctrine, submission to CRE authority, and desire to uphold other CRE churches with all peace and love.
 3. New members should make vows to the faithfulness and commitment to the churches and standards of the CRE. Likewise, current members should pledge to uphold the new church in prayer and love. [Proposed vows to be drafted later.] Discussion followed. Motion passed unanimously.
 4. [Moved up to first item]
3. Motion (CS/GH) to adopt the CRE membership vows under article III/O/3, which read as follows: "Upon being admitted into membership in the CRE, the Moderator will ask the following questions of the delegation from the new

member church.

1a. "Do you, with all the officers of your church, commit yourselves in the sight of God and before Christ Jesus to fight the good fight of faith, to lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed the good confession before many witnesses?"

1b. "Do you, with all the officers of your church, sincerely receive and adopt the Doctrinal Standards of this Confederation, subscribing to those standards with honesty and in full submission to the Word of God, which is the only infallible rule of faith and practice?"

2a. "Do you, with all the officers of your church, take heed unto yourself, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you presbyter, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood?"

2b. "Do you, with all the officers of your church, commit yourselves in faithfulness to the churches in this Confederation: to keep with them the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, to pray for them, to comfort them, to encourage them, to admonish them, and to rule with them in accordance with the Constitution of this Confederation and in full submission to the Word of God?"

When affirmative answers have been given, the moderator will then read the following statement, and then ask the delegates of all member churches to signify their agreement with a corporate "amen": "Together with all the officers of our churches, we receive you and welcome you, our brethren, into membership in this Confederation. To you we commit our blessings, our prayers, and the right hand of fellowship as you join with us in the rule of the church."

Motion passed unanimously.

4. Motion (DH/SR) to modify articles VIII/B, VIII/C, and X/A to replace the word "margin" with the word "majority." Motion passed unanimously.
5. Motion (DH/DW) that the formation of new presbyteries will not be allowed through the calendar year of 2001, and a constitutional amendment will be considered at the 2001 presbytery meeting regarding this issue. Motion passed unanimously.
6. Motion (DH/CS) to add the following as new article IX/A, "Official Record of the Constitution": "The moderator of the church council (or the sole presbytery until the formation of the church council) shall bear the responsibility for maintaining a true and accurate copy of the CRE's constitution reflecting all amendments and additions thereto. The moderator will bear the responsibility for making the constitution available by means of electronic publishing." Motion passed unanimously
7. Motion (CS/JA) to authorize the moderator to administer the vows previously adopted to all those seated here, modifying the last section to make it pertinent to our current situation. Motion passed unanimously. Brett Baker administered

the vows to the assembled voting presbyters.

8. Date and location of 2001 Presbytery meeting was discussed. Motion (CS/SR) to have the next stated meeting of Presbytery October 12, 2001, beginning at 8:00 am, in the Seattle area, the specific site to be selected by Eastside Evangelical Fellowship. Motion passed unanimously.
9. Motion (DH/TL) to end the present moderator's term immediately. Motion passed unanimously. Brett opened the floor for nominations for moderator. Doug Wilson nominated Brett Baker. Brett Baker was elected as moderator by unanimous vote.
10. Motion (SR/CS) to adjourn. Passed.
10. Dave Hatcher led the assembly in singing Psalm 84B. Greg Bero led the meeting in a closing prayer.